From whatever funds are available priority is not always given to the initial stages of learning. In many countries a disproportionate percentage of the educational budget is given to higher education rather than to the earlier stages of learning and this is despite the fact that it has been shown that when priority is given to primary schooling rather than higher education, social and economic progress is more rapid. In Sub-Saharan Africa in the 1980s only $ 1 of official development assistance (ODA) went on each primary pupil. But $ 11 went on each secondary pupil and $ 575 on each university student. All too often the educational services benefit the better off groups in society more than the disadvantaged. Unless consideration is given to the means by which the most deprived members of communities can be provided with education then human development will continue to be slow.

20. What is the role of self-reliance in the development of basic education ?

For the successful implementation of basic education programmes for all a high degree of self-reliance is essential. Governments which cannot maintain the inadequate services they offer are not in a position to expand them by making additional financial provisions. The construction of schools, the payment of staff, the provision of training facilities and the supply of materials and publications all have financial implications. But this does not mean that further educational provisions cannot be made. There is considerable evidence to show that even impoverished communities are willing and able to provide the resources needed to provide educational services. In rural Africa and Asia, for example, many poor communities construct their own schools, help to remunerate teachers and pay for their children's books. But where local communities contribute towards the provision of accommodation and manpower it is also reasonable to involve them more closely in the making of decisions with regard to the kind of education that is to be provided. If local community organizations which exercise initiative and enterprise are merely seen as instruments for implementing decisions made by a central authority on their behalf, then it is unlikely that a harmonious partnership will be developed between the administration and those it is intended to serve. If the needs of the educationally deprived are to be met then opportunities must be provided for the beneficiaries to define what they are. If programmes are imposed upon them without a full understanding of what is required, then there will inevitably be a large number of drop-outs from programmes and a lack of involvement.

21. Can local organizations be entrusted with the administration of basic education?

It is often considered that since in so many deprived communities there is such a high percentage of illiterates they are incapable of determining their own educational needs. This fails to take into consideration that some of the poorest groups in the world have for centuries survived using their own skills and knowledge. They have provided water, food and shelter for themselves without outside assistance. It is also unlikely that the most highly qualified teachers would have the same ability to survive in the harsh conditions under which so many of the disadvantaged live. Many rural communities have their own traditional organizations which operate effectively and which can be harnessed for the development of the social services they need. These should not be ignored but directly involved in the development of educational services.

22. How can basic education programmes be developed? The role of governments

The main pre-requisite is for governments to recognize the importance of basic education for all and to establish a policy for its implementation. Careful consideration must be given to the learning needs of the most deprived communities in society and to the desirability or otherwise of meeting them exclusively through primary education programmes. The need for learning opportunities which have more immediate impact must be considered. Once government policy has been determined then other

major decisions have to be made. The use of the mass media for educational purposes will require the allocation of time for appropriate programmes and staff will require training, equipment and materials. Policy decisions will also be required regarding the role of government and local organizations in the establishment and administration of programmes. If local organizations are seen merely as a source of unpaid manpower and as passive instruments for implementing decisions made at the centre then it is unlikely that local initiative and enterprise will be encouraged. For an effective programme to be established which meets local needs there must be full consultation with the local groups themselves and they must have a major role in the decision making process. The means of linking the learning required in the sectors of agriculture, health, the environment, and population education also requires co-ordination at the government level.

As a first step towards the development of basic education for all, Ministries of Education could draw up vulnerability maps indicating the priority areas where educational deprivation is greatest. Such maps would identify the areas where education is lacking and determine the size of the problem to be addressed. Such maps would show where the educationally disadvantaged are to be found, e.g. ethnic minority groups, refugees, nomads, rural communities, slum dwellers and street children and would indicate particularly vulnerable groups such as women and girls, out of school youth, widows and orphans and the disabled. Once such maps had been drawn up, governments would then be able to consider the means by which basic education could be provided for those who needed it most.

23. <u>What is the role of local organizations in basic education for all?</u>

Local organizations are the means by which the learning needs of the community can be effectively met. But such organizations are not mere instruments for making demands upon the government but are principally the means by which local manpower, initiative and resources are harnessed in the common interest. If elected representatives see their task to be only that of spokesmen and spokeswomen for the communities they serve then it is unlikely that much progress will be made. Local representatives have a major responsibility to work on behalf of the community, to identify the resources that are to be found there, to employ the manpower and womenpower available, to determine what the learning priorities are and to find out the means of meeting them. In most instances training and advice will be required to enable them to work effectively and to demonstrate how common action can bring results. Any committees established will need to know how to keep records and accounts and to liaise with the social services which can provide essential information and knowledge. Such committees will also have to establish the means by which the members of the communities can express their views and needs without having these decided for them by their appointed representatives. The local needs for clean water, food, shelter, health facilities, income earning skills, day care, literacy and numeracy and formal schooling must be identified and the means of providing them, without undue reliance upon outside help, reviewed. The establishment of responsible local organizations is probably the most difficult task in the setting up of basic education for all.

It will be argued that the most deprived communities are illiterate and do not have the capacity to make appropriate decisions with regard to basic education for all. Experience has shown this to be false. Even in deprived communities there are usually some literates and refugees and displaced persons may often include those who are well qualified educationally. In nomadic societies, too, literates can be found. Weavers, potters, brick makers, carpenters, leather and metal workers, and tailors are frequently found in such societies and have the income earning skills which all societies need. They can play an important part in the teaching of essential skills. Women who act as midwives can be called upon to take part in programmes relating to health in the community. Those who look after cattle or grow crops can be more closely involved in teaching about agriculture. It is important that the human

resources within the community be identified, used and developed to assist in the promotion of basic education for all. No community is destitute of human resources but the means by which the best use can be made of them have not always been studied.

24. What evidence is there that local organizations can take responsibility for basic education programmes?

There is growing evidence of this. In Brazil, for example, in some urban slums the local people have established a system of day care facilities which rivals that in more developed countries. In India street children are now joining organizations which prevent them from being exploited as child labourers. In camps for drought victims in Africa local organizations were set up to establish educational services which included schools. More examples can be found. All these programmes show that deprived individuals cannot overcome obstacles individually but can do so through corporate action. Assistance is also provided to such initiatives by non governmental organizations often on a comparatively modest scale but with help going directly to the communities concerned. Such help is needed to identify the human and material resources available and the means by which they can be used effectively. The committees controlling such programmes will need training and guidance in administration, financial procedures and methods of supervision. Education in the organization of services is essential. Above all local societies must have confidence in their ability to take charge of their own services.

25. What innovations are required to establish basic education for all?

There must first be an acceptance that basic education for all is not the exclusive concern of government administrators, universities, schools and teachers. It is the responsibility of all members of society. All those who can assist in basic education should be identified and animated to contribute to human resource development.

These can include voluntary organizations, women's organizations, extension services, clinics, bodies concerned with malaria control and prevention, water resources, youth organizations, charitable organizations, banks offering credit facilities to deprived communities and mass media services. There are many potential means of extending learning opportunities to all which are not fully utilised. Such organizations often have more frequent access to the most deprived members of society than does the school system. Their role in providing education should be encouraged and recognized.

26. What training is required for the implementation of basic education programmes?

The members of locally appointed organizations will need help and guidance in understanding their duties and responsibilities. The identification of learning needs, the means required to meet them, the harnessing of local human and other resources, the construction difficulties met when using local materials and resources and liaison with the appropriate services and organizations all require training. The maintenance of records and accounts, the means of administering and supervising programmes may demand training though it also has to be recognized that some communities are not without experience in such matters. The amount of assistance required may differ considerably from one community to another.

Those responsible for providing equipment and materials may also need training in the methods of procurement and purchase, in the storing of supplies and in their delivery and distribution. Training will also be necessary for those involved in the production of reading materials (whether nationally or

locally) and they will include printers, publishers, illustrators, writers of texts, translators, etc.

27. What examples of basic education programmes for all can be given?

(i) The use of smokeless stoves

In many parts of the world cooking is done in confined spaces by means of burning wood. In consequence kitchens are smoke-filled and those who do the cooking are often subject to respiratory problems and infections of the eyes. In order to obtain wood to burn, women and girls are often obliged to go great distances daily in search of it. This takes up valuable time which could be more profitably used for educational and income earning purposes. In Ethiopia when drought victims were resettled and basic education programmes for all were introduced, efforts were made to address this problem. Simple designs for smokeless stoves were developed. These used bricks made out of earth and metal pipes which released the smoke into the open air instead of inside the kitchen. They also had the advantage of using less wood than the traditional open fires since they could use other combustible materials. The introduction of these new stoves was largely undertaken by women's organizations and by community representatives. The human benefits were immediately calculable in terms of improved health and in the saving of labour. Additional benefits were to be found in the protection of the environment since less wood was used for cooking. Reading materials on the construction of smokeless stoves were prepared to spread information on the making and use of these stoves and craftswomen showed how they could be made.

(ii) Facts for Life

The publication of Facts for Life has been of major importance in providing health education throughout the world. This booklet prepared jointly by WHO, UNICEF and UNESCO contains basic health messages which can do much to prevent disease and improve community health. It has been translated, printed and published in a great number of languages and its messages have reached millions of people. It is used by nurses, doctors and teachers as well as by individuals. It provides reading materials for literacy classes. The information it conveys is also disseminated by means of wall charts and pictures and through radio and television programmes. While it is difficult to assess with precision the impact that Facts for Life has had on a particular country's health there can be little doubt that it has been considerable.

(iii) The use of the soap opera for conveying educational messages

In Afghanistan the formal education system has almost completely broken down. Schools have been destroyed or damaged and many teachers have left the country or died. Many of the five million refugees are returning to the country only to find that social services are completely lacking not only in the countryside but in the towns as well. It will take very many years for schools to be repaired and built, for teachers to be trained, curricula drawn up and materials procured and delivered. Scarce funds have to be allocated, not only to education, but also to mine clearance, agriculture, health, roads and communications, etc. To use the meagre funds available for education to assist only a handful of schools would not meet the needs of all. Efforts have, therefore, been made to find means by which education for all can be provided. One of these is the development of a "soap opera" or a radio series in which the daily life of a family is shown in dramatic form. In the series, various educational messages are conveyed relating to such matters as the provision of shelter and food, the prevention of disease, the avoidance of injury from mines, the means of earning a living, the protection of the environment, etc. In other words, education is provided through entertainment. The programmes are prepared with the

assistance of the BBC which helps with the training of staff such as script writers and producers working in close collaboration with all the social sectors which have messages to convey. Since the radio is known to have a wide audience throughout Afghanistan the principle of education for all is followed. The programmes are also accompanied by reading materials relating to them, thus encouraging literacy. The mass media can have an important impact on human development and can be more cost effective than other means of providing education.

(iv) The rehabilitation of the crafts of carpet and silk weaving

In Afghanistan the making of carpets was the fourth major earner of foreign exchange. Today the quality of the carpets produced has declined considerably. The wool used is of poor quality, chemical dyes are used instead of vegetable ones and are less resistant to damage and the designs are inferior to those used in the past. The skills of carpet and silk weaving which were traditionally passed on from parents to children are in danger of being lost along with an important source of income. Assistance has, therefore, been provided to rehabilitate these ancient crafts which are also an important part of the country's cultural heritage. Workshops have been held in which skilled craftsmen and craftswomen passed on their skills to others and where wool was dyed using locally available plants and vegetables and where instruction was provided in the construction and setting up of looms. These workshops were followed by the production of simple, illustrated reading materials in the languages of the weavers. These were designed to encourage the acquisition of literacy by providing reading matter on topics familiar to the learners. Slides and films on the workshops were also produced relating to carpet and silk weaving. A radio soap opera will also contain elements relating to these traditional crafts. The responsibility for the workshops which provided the skills training was in the hands of local community organizations. A great number of people were involved in the programmes and they included craftsmen and craftswomen, the authors and illustrators of readers, script writers, producers and actors in radio programmes, etc. The projects have provided income earning opportunities for refugees and displaced persons as well as local communities and have benefitted women and girls, widows and orphans and other disadvantaged groups. Not least they have contributed to the efforts being made to preserve the country's cultural heritage.

These are only a few of the education programmes for all which have been implemented. There are many other examples. All of them are designed to convey educational messages to disadvantaged groups and thereby to promote human development and social and economic progress. They are not implemented through the formal school system but through craftsmen and craftswomen, the writers and publishers of reading materials and the producers and script writers of radio broadcasts, etc. All these are important resources which can be used in the interest of extending learning opportunities to all. There are no doubt many other ways of doing this and information regarding them should be exchanged.

28. What difficulties and problems are met in the development of education for all?

Many difficulties have to be overcome before basic education programmes operate effectively. There will be considerable opposition to and criticism of them from many quarters and not least from school teachers, university staff and educational administrators who may see in them a threat to their traditional role as the exclusive arbiters on educational matters. Those with backgrounds in formal education may see education in terms of school buildings, teacher training, curriculum development, textbook production and the use of examinations and certification as the means for assessing progress in learning. Other non-formal education programmes, such as those for teaching literacy and numeracy and for training in practical skills, will still be regarded as being the exclusive concern of Ministries of Education and their provision will remain dependent upon the provision of government financial

resources. There will be a continuing insistence upon certification despite the fact that recent research has shown that in certain countries children who do not go to school often perform better in life skills than those who do. The contribution towards education made in the home, in the workshop and in the field by family members, extension and health workers and craftsmen and craftswomen will not be taken into account. The concept of basic education will be dismissed as a second best and inferior option and a means of depriving the disadvantaged of their right to education. Those who work in the field of education may speak on behalf of those considered to be without education without being fully aware of what their learning needs are. The drop-out rate in schools and universities throughout the world is evidence of the irrelevance of so much of the education that is provided and the charge is frequently made that educational institutions do not prepare students for the world of work. When educators do assist in the employment of new learning techniques, such as educational broadcasting, their contributions may not always be effective. They may use language above the heads of the listeners, the length of the programmes may be more suitable for the lecture room than the broadcast programme and they may fail to convey the learning messages with sufficient clarity and repetition. The result may be that the educational broadcast is dismissed as an ineffective means of providing learning opportunities.

The animation and mobilisation of local communities to take responsibility for basic education is by no means an easy matter, though they may be more open to the concept than the educators themselves. Considerable skill and guidance are needed to enable community leaders to set up their own organization and programmes in the interests of basic education. The initial selection of community representatives may lead to some unsuitable appointments being made and it may take some time before those are found who are capable of harnessing local manpower and resources and setting up programmes which serve the needs of the community as a whole.

In all the examples of basic education programmes cited above, many problems had to be solved before success was achieved. While the success of Facts for Life in health education is widely acclaimed, it must be noted that in one country many copies of it were burnt when certain members of religious groups objected to the use of photographs of women and girls in the publication. In one instance when extension workers were asked to assist in the spreading of information on the making and use of the smokeless stove they reported that the local communities were not interested in using them and gave a number of reasons for this. Further investigation on the spot revealed that it was the extension workers themselves who were unwilling to provide the necessary instruction while the rural people themselves readily accepted the innovation. The value of using the radio as a means of providing education will also be called into question and it will be argued that there is a shortage of radios and that batteries are not available and expensive. Yet field visits will reveal that radios are in general use and that most of them are in working order. Doubts will also be expressed regarding the capacity of soap operas to convey educational messages although there is a considerable body of evidence to show that the impact of such programmes is very great. The implementation of the programmes to promote carpet and silk weaving as income earning skills was criticised although their popularity was such that constant demands were made for their continuation and expansion. Arguments were advanced to show that the use of natural dyes was both time consuming and unacceptable to the weavers. But when the responsibility for making the dyes was assumed by others and not by the weavers themselves then no opposition was encountered.

It would be vain to deny that there are problems to be overcome when introducing the basic education approach. But innovation is difficult and will always invite opposition. Basic education for all is a challenge to traditional ways of providing education and those who take it up must expect to make considerable efforts.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE FOR EDUCATION IN AFGHANISTAN

General

It is generally acknowledged that development aid does not give sufficient emphasis to the relief of deprivation and poverty. The richest 40 per cent of the developing countries receive about twice as much aid per head as the poorest 40 per cent. Aid for special groups such as refugees is always less than is required. A country such as El Salvador gets five times more assistance than Bangladesh, though the latter has 24 times more people and is five times poorer. At the present time some governments provide aid through non-governmental agencies (NGOs) rather than international ones and these have increased greatly in number in recent years. In 1990 the OECD counted 2,542 NGOs in 24 countries compared with 1,603 in 1980. One estimate calculates that there are 25,000 grassroots organizations in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu alone. Certainly NGOs have a more visible presence in the field today than do other international agencies.

But according to one study made by the Overseas Development Institute in London even NGOs usually fail to help the poorest in society and while government and official aid programmes fail to reach the bottom 20 per cent of income groups, most NGO assistance probably ignores the bottom 5 to 10 per cent.

When it is so difficult to ensure that aid reaches the most deprived sectors in society, then it becomes even harder to obtain assistance for the education sector. This was particularly the case in Afghanistan.

The situation in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is a country divided against itself by a patchwork of ethnic, religious, linguistic and even political differences. There are various urban centres of control in towns such as Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat, Jalalabad and Kandahar and even the capital, Kabul, was split into two by rival factions.

The circumstances surrounding the implementation of aid programmes in Afghanistan are, therefore, of particular complexity. The capital, Kabul, and other urban centres such as Herat, Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kandahar, were until 1992, run by the central authority while the predominantly rural areas in the rest of the country were under the control of a large number of local commanders opposed to the government and variously estimated to number between 350 and 400. There were also an estimated 5 million refugees in the neighbouring countries of Pakistan and Iran. The majority of them were in Pakistan and concentrated mainly near the border towns of Peshawar and Quetta. In the capital of Pakistan, Islamabad, UN agency offices gave - and still continue to give - considerable support to the Afghan assistance programme. The education sector was particularly badly affected by the conflict within the country. Schools were destroyed and many teachers and lecturers were killed, left the profession, or became refugees outside the country. Many of the better educated obtained employment elsewhere and many settled down in the countries of asylum and are unwilling to return home because of the prevailing insecurity.

In the early stages of the conflict there was considerable emphasis on the provision of aid for the refugees outside the country. But in the course of time it became evident that the needs of the population within the country, many of whom were displaced from their homes, were equally great, and had to be met. Subsequently greater importance was given to the provision of aid inside Afghanistan

and it finally became a condition for the receipt of assistance that it be provided for rehabilitation programmes within the country rather than in refugee camps elsewhere. This was also intended to encourage the repatriation of refugees and to assist them in their rehabilitation efforts. The implementation of such programmes presented the donor agencies with major obstacles to overcome. Travel within Afghanistan was - and is - not without its dangers. The security of staff - both Afghan and international - was a major preoccupation at all times. The presence of millions of mines throughout the country, the need for prior security clearance and the authorisation of local commanders and armed groups for travel made any mission within the country a hazardous enterprise demanding precise preparation and foresight. In more recent years the activities of bands of armed militias in both urban centres and rural areas and who are not subject to any particular authority have added to the general insecurity. Communication with urban centres is still maintained principally by air and through the lease of private aircraft.

Until 1992 agencies were able to deal with a single authority in Kabul, but outside the country, and based mainly in Peshawar in Pakistan, there were at least eight different groups which claimed to represent the people as a whole. Within the country, too, there were powerful resistance groups which opposed the central authority and some of them established their own administration over large areas of the country. Local conflicts among the various resistance groups operating inside Afghanistan were frequent and sporadic outbreaks of fighting were common.

Against this kaleidoscopic background of factions and forces it was necessary for the United Nations to attempt to provide aid to all who needed it and to do so with impartiality and without regard to allegiances and beliefs. Although great care was made to dispense assistance equitably and fairly there were inevitable accusations that favouritism or bias had been shown. The UNDP office which had been opened in the 1950s continued to operate in Kabul until 1992 despite the constant insecurity which prevailed. Another major assistance programme was administered from Islamabad by UNOCA later renamed UNOCHA and it opened sub-offices in Peshawar and Quetta and in urban centres within Afghanistan itself. The co-ordination of all these programmes was, in itself, a major exercise.

When planning exercises were started by the UN for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Afghanistan in 1988, priority was correctly given to such areas as the clearance of mines, the provision of water, food and shelter, the repair of irrigation systems, the eradication of agricultural pests, etc. The provision of educational facilities was given low priority by the international agencies (except UNHCR and to some extent UNICEF) in the first instance though NGOs had been actively engaged for some years in educational activities. On the whole education was seen as a long-term exercise concerned with the rehabilitation of the formal education system and the provision of schooling for children with emphasis mainly on the building of schools, the training of teachers, the development of curricula and the publication of textbooks. The broader concept of basic education for all, which permitted programmes of more immediate impact and which included skills training for out-of-school young people and which were designed to lead to increased food production, improved health and better living conditions, was either not understood or considered of minor importance. Considerable effort was, therefore, required to explain the principles of basic education for all and to obtain approval for financial assistance for the execution of projects in this domain.

Although there was considerable scepticism regarding what was considered a new approach to education on the part of many agency staff, it was significant that the Afghans themselves were aware of the importance of education in the overall rehabilitation exercise. It was largely at their insistence that a small proportion of the aid budget was finally allocated to education projects.

When assistance for education was approved it was frequently seen by agency, NGO and Afghan staff as destined for the development of schooling facilities. This was inevitable given that many of those recruited to work in education projects came from university and teacher training backgrounds. NGO staff were often recent university graduates whose experience was in teaching in schools, training colleges and universities. Afghan nationals engaged in education projects came from similar backgrounds. UNHCR, which for a number of years was the principal, if not the only international agency concerned with the provision of education for refugees, concentrated mostly on the setting-up of accommodation for schooling (of both temporary and permanent construction), the training and payment of teachers and the production of textbooks. So that when UNESCO was finally consulted a pattern for education projects had already been established. It was then difficult to suggest or bring about change in the kinds of projects considered worthy of assistance.

In consequence, the proposals received for project implementation were predictable in nature but not always appropriate for those they were intended to benefit. The commonest request was that aid should be used for the payment of teachers' salaries. Teachers, with the advantage of their educational backgrounds and which other refugees lacked, were more articulate in making their demands known, and while these were both legitimate and understandable, they failed to take into account that any aid used to pay salaries would again help the privileged rather than the poorest members of society. Although it is well known that in normal times teachers' salaries make up the major part of all education budgets, a number of agencies and NGOs acceded to their demands. The foreseeable result was that when budgetary constraints forced the payment of salaries to cease then a number of violent confrontations followed. It cannot be emphasised strongly enough that salary payments are long-term commitments and even when there is an understanding that they will be made for a limited period of time they can only be terminated with difficulty.

There was also a tendency on the part of agency and NGO staff as well as educated Afghans themselves to speak on behalf of the deprived without adequate prior consultation with them. Instances occurred when self appointed spokesmen for certain communities were, on further investigation, found to have no popular support among the people they claimed to represent. Emergency situations always produce spokesmen and spokeswomen for the community at large and it may sometimes be the case that these representatives speak from personal rather than common interest. It is also unfortunately true that there are some who attempt to profit from disaster and care needs to be exercised to ensure that any aid provided is not misappropriated. Where there was a reluctance to agree to a regular monitoring of assistance it was often considered inadvisable to proceed with the projects proposed. Attempts will be made to use aid for the promotion of sectarian, ethnic or religious interests and some of the purposes for which it is employed will not always meet with the approval of the donors. Vehicles and equipment, for example, may be stolen for private use or for re-sale and relief supplies may be requisitioned by the use of force and menace. The danger of manipulation and coercion to meet particular ends can never, therefore, be entirely eliminated.

In such circumstances it is easy to accede to piecemeal and individual requests without giving detailed consideration to how aid can be equitably distributed. The building of a school within a particular community will certainly benefit a number of pupils and their teachers, but thought may not have been given to whether the community itself would have preferred to give priority to training courses for craftsmen and craftswomen and to supply tools for their use.

When education projects were being considered for Afghanistan many requests were received for assistance in the establishment and construction of special institutions for the education of the disabled and orphans. It has been estimated that there are 500,000 disabled people in the country who

are the victims of mines and other war injuries. Many children have been left without parents or other family members. But well meaning though these requests were, they failed to take into consideration that such members of society should not be isolated in special institutions but as far as possible re-integrated into normal community life. The need to find other means by which the disabled and orphans can take part in normal educational programmes is a matter for more immediate consideration than the allocation of considerable sums for the building of special institutions.

A further problem in the development of educational programmes was the assumption that only teachers, lecturers and educational administrators had the necessary competence to determine the type of projects that should be implemented. While their professional skills were needed for formal school programmes this did not mean that they had the necessary managerial, organizational and administrative skills and experience which enabled them to run large-scale aid programmes. There are many aspects of emergency relief which require a special competence. These include the skills needed to animate and encourage community participation, develop local responsiblity for the implementation of programmes, operate local budgets, procure, store and distribute supplies, establish publishing facilities for a variety of reading materials and not only textbooks, and develop the use of the mass media for the conveyance of educational messages, etc. The provision of education for all is not the exclusive concern of educators but demands the skills of others as well. It requires a knowledge of the social structures of the communities that are to receive assistance, their power sources, culture, language and beliefs. Skills are required which promote the harnessing of local manpower and resources and which encourage voluntary effort and the assumption of responsibility for programmes. The "remittance mentality" often found in the victims of disasters, which assumes that all help needed must come from outside, will have to be replaced by one which relies on combined effort to restore self-confidence and accepts the need for self-reliance. This in turn demands greater emphasis on field work in the formulation of projects in association with communities and in their implementation. The training of competent personnel in such work is essential. The co-ordination with other sectors and agencies engaged in the provision of assistance, such as agriculture and health, which also have educational messages to convey, is also necessary. The aims of such programmes cannot be achieved by centralised or regional administrations far from the places of implementation and which confine themselves to discussions and the drawing-up of guidelines. A field presence at the grassroots level which provides guidance and understanding is of major importance in rehabilitation programmes and requires careful training. To date little has been done to draw up and provide the relevant training programmes.

It should be apparent that the development of educational assistance programmes for the victims of disaster and deprivation is a specialised area requiring skill, training and experience. Well meaning educators with no experience of such situations will not always work effectively on behalf of those whom they wish to serve. The problems they encounter will be manifold and the challenges immense. Special programmes need to be established which enable them to face them.

The situation in Afghanistan also led to the mushrooming of non-governmental agencies involved in the provision of assistance. Some of these were long-established and reputable organizations, with valuable international experience and trained personnel. Others sprang up almost overnight and sometimes disappeared as quickly. Some were funded with donor government support, others received agency funds and some depended upon fund-raising activities. Some were concerned with specific activities such as mine clearance and others had special programmes in the fields of agriculture, health or education. Some had overtly religious or ethnic aims and had close associations with particular Afghan groups. At a time when the funding of NGOs was easier than it is today there were about 150 NGOs providing assistance to Afghanistan. Their numbers were so great that they set up their own co-ordination agencies in both Peshawar and Quetta known as ACBAR and SWABAC respectively, and

INTRODUCTION

In many countries access to education is denied to large numbers of people because of man-made conflicts and natural disasters. Often the worst affected are those which are least developed and where learning opportunities are open only to a minority of the population. Among such countries are Afghanistan, Cambodia, Mozambique, Somalia and Sudan.

It has been estimated that there are one billion deprived people in the world of whom 20 million are refugees. The financial, manpower and material resources needed to provide education services for them are enormous and they are but part of their overall development needs. Important sectors such as those of agriculture, health and industry also require assistance and usually take precedence over education. Both short and long-term strategies are necessary for the education sector which will ensure that appropriate and practicable learning opportunities, designed to contribute towards social and economic development, are made available to all. Afghanistan, which is one of the countries which urgently need to rehabilitate their education services, is the subject of this study.

Afghanistan has been in a state of unremitting conflict for a period of 15 years and after such a long period of strife and hardship the silent majority of the Afghan people are weary of the quarrels which have split their country. They now want to be allowed to rehabilitate their communities in peace and tranquillity. These years of turmoil have resulted in a waste of human resources and the denial of a basic human right, which is the right to education. Large numbers of children, young people and adults have had no access to any kind of education whatsoever.

When the Soviet forces left Afghanistan in February 1989, after almost ten years of occupation, the educational services were in ruins. An estimated 2,000 schools had been destroyed, 2,000 teachers had died and 15,000 more had left the profession. Nearly two thirds of the buildings available for primary, secondary and vocational education had been destroyed or needed repair. Some training colleges, for example, had been used to quarter troops, some had been mined and many library books had been burnt. About 55 per cent of the educational buildings in Kabul, 73 per cent in Balkh and 70 per cent in Herat were damaged as a result of war. About 45 per cent of primary schools were without buildings or were housed in makeshift accommodation such as steel containers. The situation has worsened further with every passing day.

Efforts were made by international agencies and non-governmental organizations (both Afghan and foreign) to provide education services, both within Afghanistan and in neighbouring countries such as Pakistan and Iran where five million people took refuge. UNHCR assisted in the building of schools and in other ways. UNESCO, UNOCA and UNICEF provided funds for such projects as skills training workshops, the publication of simple reading materials, the provision of accommodation for primary schools, the procurement of essential supplies for schools and the use of the radio for educational purposes. Non-governmental agencies assisted a variety of programmes, most of them related to the formal education system and they included teacher training, the development of curricula, the production of school textbooks, training in management and supervision, etc. The help provided was necessarily of a disparate nature because of the unsettled conditions within the country and little co-ordination was possible. There were, for example, no less than eight different curricula in use in schools provided for Afghan children outside the country and within Afghanistan itself school curricula were revised five times in little more than ten years.

In the years following the departure of the Soviet forces in 1989 the situation with regard to the provision of education deteriorated even further. More schools and institutions were destroyed or

they liaised regularly with the UN agencies. Their importance was such that in the absence of a single Afghan authority in Pakistan they assumed a major decision-making role with regard to the provision of assistance for Afghanistan. This was only modified after the changes which occurred in 1992.

Some agencies had considerable funds at their disposal and operated a wide range of programmes. Those in education covered textbook production, the training of teachers, the running of schools and the provision of fellowships. In consequence the refugee schools in Pakistan used no less than eight different curricula, had a variety of textbooks at their disposal and provided schooling of uneven quality. In some of the schools, for example, there was a drop-out rate of 50 per cent after the first year of schooling. Some education programmes were more realistic in their aims and operated with greater success. Training courses for craftsmen and craftswomen, for example, proved to be extremely popular since they provided skills training in fields such as carpentry, plumbing, metal work and automotive repair and on the completion of courses of instruction the trainees were provided with the essential tools needed to enable them to earn a living.

NGOs also provided employment for educated Afghan refugees in their administrations and enabled them to establish close links with particular Afghan groups and personalities. This also led to a tendency on the part of some NGOs to become spokesmen for particular groups and to the loss of a certain amount of detachment and impartiality. In the course of time the Afghan refugees themselves set up their own NGOs and became eligible for UN assistance for this purpose once certain criteria had been met.

Requests from NGOs for financial assistance were frequently concerned with the provision of cash grants for local leaders, the payment of teachers' salaries and funds for the construction of buildings. These were often submitted by their NGO sponsors without any evaluation of their merit or suitability and it became a time-consuming exercise to sift through the proposals made.

The majority of NGO projects were located outside Afghanistan and in or near refugee camps. This meant that many non-Afghan staff engaged in the implementation of projects often lacked a first-hand knowledge of the country and knew it only from the viewpoint of the refugees with whom they were in contact, many of whom had also been away from their homes for some years. Since most projects were of a long-term nature there was little understanding of the concept of basic education for all and of the ways in which it could be developed in Afghanistan. An example of this can be given. In March 1990, on the day of the opening of the World Conference on Basic Education for All, at Jomtien in Thailand, a meeting took place in Peshawar of representatives of all NGOs engaged in education projects. Although in the preceding months considerable efforts had been made through discussion and the distribution of materials to spread information on the basic education approach, no reference whatsoever was made to it during the discussions which took place. When finally a UN agency representative did refer to it, the response was either dismissive or lukewarm.

The lack of any common strategy for education among the various resistance groups and the divergence of views regarding priorities for assistance further complicated the task of preparing appropriate projects. In the capital and urban centres there was a strong demand for aid for education. Despite all the constraints with which the authorities had to deal, educational opportunities had been opened up though there was an unnecessary emphasis on higher education. Schooling for girls had expanded. Women made up the majority of university students and primary school teachers. Six new universities were established during the troubled years of the 1980s though they lacked qualified staff, adequate accommodation, books, supplies and equipment. As a result of this expansion of higher education, services available for primary education deteriorated. A national literacy campaign was

mounted by the authorities and while it was welcomed in some quarters it was rejected in others as an exercise in political subversion. Among the resistance commanders and local community leaders there was no common approach to the provision of educational services. Some dismissed outright the suggestion of schooling for girls while others welcomed it wholeheartedly. Some regarded institutions of higher education as nothing more than as centres of political activity and as antagonistic to religion. Representatives of all these diverse points of view claimed to speak on behalf of the country as a whole and it became an easy matter to cite any one of them as indicative of what was required. A strategy had to be devised which would take into account all these different points of view and which would ensure that any aid provided was allocated fairly and impartially.

Finally it is to be noted that throughout the years of conflict and despite the seemingly insurmountable obstacles which had to be overcome there were resistance commanders within the country who managed to set up their own administrative and social services, including the provision of schooling, within the areas they controlled. This they did with little or no outside assistance and this is proof of the capacity for self-reliance and local organization which even the most disadvantaged groups in society possess.

While the victims of disaster and deprivation are generally shown in the form of despairing old people and traumatised young children, it must also be remembered that they also include large numbers of young people whose capacity for rehabilitation and reconstruction is considerable. It is mainly upon the shoulders of these potentially energetic and resourceful men and women that the responsibility for rebuilding shattered lives rests. Even among the destitute there are enormous human resources which can be harnessed and used effectively. Once relief has been provided through the provision of water, food and basic shelter then the enterprise and initiative of the more active members of society must be called upon for the rehabilitation of community life. Basic education has a major role to play in this exercise and educators have a duty to participate in it to the full.

What can be stated with certainty is that the vast majority of the Afghan people, of whatever ethnic origin or allegiance are weary of the unremitting conflict and quarrelling which has torn their country apart and want to be allowed to return to their homes and to live there in peace and tranquillity.

THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME OF ASSISTANCE FOR BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL IN AFGHANISTAN

In the circumstances which prevailed in Afghanistan it was impossible to formulate projects of assistance which followed conventional patterns. The basic personnel and facility requirements were almost entirely lacking. Insecurity and uncertainty regarding the future also made it difficult to plan programmes for the long term. The lack of a recognized authority representative of all parts of Afghanistan made it unrealistic to develop a national programme. Initially projects had to be drafted which took into account a variety of needs. In urban centres the main preoccupation was with the repair and rebuilding of the shattered formal education system while in the rural areas the concern was to provide education opportunities for those who had none at all and which were mainly of a non-formal nature. It was also necessary to formulate programmes which did not discriminate against particular groups or show preference for the more privileged members of society. Finally, it had to be accepted that assistance to education was generally given lower priority by donor funding agencies than the provision of food, water, shelter and the clearance of mines which took precedence in the overall rehabilitation exercise. Any funds available were limited compared with those for other sectors and had to be used in such a way that they had the maximum impact.

Since so many schools had been destroyed or damaged and so many members of the teaching profession had died or left the country, it was clear that for the immediate future self-reliant approaches had to be developed which depended to a large extent on community decision-making and local participation in the establishment of appropriate programmes. This was essential because of the lack of schools, the high national level of illiteracy, the large numbers of out-of-school young people and the growing numbers of dependent people such as widows, orphans and the disabled who were without any means of support. Responsibility, therefore, had to be given to communities and in due course to Afghan NGOs. This had both advantages and disadvantages since although it conferred responsibility upon the Afghans themselves, the difficulties experienced in obtaining access to project locations made monitoring inadequate and at times impossible.

Although the underlying principle of the educational assistance programme was to provide basic education for all, this did not mean that the need for primary education was neglected and in fact the major part of the programme was devoted to the provision of formal schooling. This consisted of the construction and repair of buildings, the provision of facilities for schools and the procurement of essential supplies needed in teaching. Programmes related to curriculum development, teacher training and textbook production were not undertaken because of the lack of any agreed curricula and the wide divergence of views among the various Afghan groups as to what these should be. Despite this, many NGOs continued to develop curricula although there was never any general agreement regarding the ones produced.

The education assistance programme developed for Afghanistan fell into five main categories:

1. **Assistance in the provision of accommodation and temporary shelter for schooling and the repair of damaged schools**. Priority was given to primary schools. This assistance was intended to encourage community self-reliance and the use of local skills, labour and materials in the provision of social services and was designed to be carried out in liaison with a related HABITAT project for the repair and construction of housing. The project provided advisory services to communities and to Afghan NGOs and endeavoured to ensure that earthquake resistant buildings would be erected with adequate ventilation and lighting. Reading materials on low cost construction using local materials and labour would also be produced.

2. **Assistance in the establishment of community organizations and services**. The lack of a recognized national administration made local organization necessary. Since this was required for the establishment of education services at the community level, guidance and advice in their development was essential. It was also required in order to ensure that local priorities and needs were met and to provide the means by which local human and material resources were harnessed effectively for rehabilitation purposes.

3. **The provision of basic supplies for schools and communities** such as pens, pencils, exercise books and blackboards and tools and equipment for non formal programmes in gardening, carpentry, weaving, sewing, metal work, etc., and items necessary for health education were all needed. The best means of procuring, storing and distributing these supplies also had to be given consideration.

4. In the absence of any agreed curricula it was decided to give priority to **the production of simple reading materials suitable for new literates in the relevant languages used in Afghanistan** rather than assist in the publication of textbooks for use in the school system. It was also intended that such readers would assist in the development of basic education for all since they would be made available to all members of the community and not school children alone. The programme was also designed to set standards of book design and illustration which would promote the publication of attractive books and which would encourage literacy and the reading habit. Relevant topics in the fields of health, skills training, child care, low cost building construction, etc., would be dealt with in the works published. The programme would also involve the private sector more closely in the publication programme and would assist in the provision of other reading materials, e.g. local newspapers, reading materials needed to support distance education, etc.

5. Since it was found that broadcasting services had a great impact both inside Afghanistan and in refugee camps outside the country, it was realised that there was considerable scope for **the use of the mass media for educational purposes**. Many radio services including those of the BBC, the Voice of America, Deutsche Welle, Radio Pakistan, Radio Moscow sent out programmes in Afghan languages and were known to reach vast numbers of people. Even the difficulties experienced in obtaining replacement batteries for transistor radios did not appear to prevent most people from listening regularly to programmes. The wide range of broadcasting services also ensured that different points of view were expressed and enabled unbiassed judgments to be made. The opportunities for conveying educational messages through entertainment needed to be explored, so that deprived groups would have access to learning.

Initially, consultancy services on Basic Education were made available to Kabul, where the central administration was located, and to Islamabad, Pakistan, from where the major international agencies operated their aid programmes and which had access to resistance groups. Shorter term consultancies were also provided in specific fields such as teacher training, distance education and skills training in carpet and silk weaving and the making of vegetable dyes. In the field of reading materials production, practical assistance was given by the UNESCO Regional Office for Book Development in Asia and the Pacific which was also located in Islamabad. As additional funds for basic education became available, a project was established in Quetta, Pakistan, for the purpose of assisting in the development of basic education facilities for all in the east and south of Afghanistan. As Quetta lies near the border with Afghanistan, where all projects had to be implemented, it was anticipated that this would ensure easy access to project sites. This project provided the services of an architect in low-cost building techniques, and an adviser in Basic Education for All. Additional services were furnished by UN volunteers in the fields of school building and basic education.

The Quetta project ultimately obtained the co-operation of Afghan NGOs in the establishment of twenty-five educational facilities in the east, south and west of the country. Six of these were Basic Education centres built by selected Afghan NGOs and nineteen were primary schools for rural children housed in large tents which were intended for use not only for schooling but for other community services as well. The establishment and administration of these combined schools and community centres was in all cases the responsibility of locally appointed education committees. Assistance in the organization of such bodies was provided through the training of five basic education organizers, known as Master Trainers, who in turn trained 440 animateurs assigned to work in the four provinces where the programme was implemented. Simple furniture providing storage and other facilities was made and delivered to the centres and schools along with kits for pupils. These kits consisting of school bags containing pens, pencils, exercise books, erasers, etc., were procured both from the UNICEF warehouse in Copenhagen and through local purchase in Pakistan.

A major feature of the situation in Afghanistan was the chronic lack of reading materials of any kind. In the programme developed for the publication of reading materials considerable help was given by the UNESCO Regional Office for Book Development in Asia and the Pacific which was located in Islamabad. Advice was given on suitable formats for texts; illustrators, publishers and printers were identified and responsibility was assumed for the editing and proof reading of texts. As a result books were published which provided models for reading materials for use in basic education programmes. These included Facts for Life, the UNESCO/WHO/UNICEF text on health matters which was translated into both Dari and Pashto, Murad and Parvan Make a Carpet, a reader on carpet weaving which was written in Dari and Turcoman and Chief of Silk, on Ikat silk weaving which was again written in Dari and Turcoman, and Earth Construction a HABITAT publication on low-cost building techniques which was written in Dari. All these publications set standards for book production and showed how attractive reading materials could be used to promote literacy and to meet real learning needs. The success of the programme can be judged by the demands made for additional copies of the texts to be printed.

Broadcasting services in all parts of the world sent out news programmes for Afghan listeners. Some, such as the BBC, also developed programmes for Afghanistan in special areas such as mine clearance and health education. In view of the lack of access to educational services of any kind such broadcasts served to meet learning needs as well as to inform and provide news. Important beneficiaries were girls and women who were generally more deprived than males as far as education was concerned and obtained their learning in their homes. It was, therefore, decided to use broadcasting as a means of providing education for all by conveying educational messages through programmes which were also designed to entertain. This was done through a "soap opera" or family drama, entitled New Home, New Life. This technique though common in many countries of the world was still comparatively new to Afghanistan. A project was developed by the BBC with help from UNESCO and other international agencies and NGOs which trained Afghan radio producers, script writers and actors in the preparation and production of programmes. It also collaborated closely with all those sectors and agencies which had educational messages to convey. The project also developed procedures for measuring the impact of programmes with sample groups and produced materials related to the broadcasts in the form of cassettes and supplementary illustrated reading materials. The music used in the programmes was also recorded on cassettes.

The programme of assistance for basic education for all in Afghanistan has many innovative features and differs in many ways from those established for deprived groups elsewhere. It attempts to take into account the particular complexities of the situation within the country and to do so without discrimination or favour. It is designed to reach as many of the population as possible using only the limited means at its disposal. It takes into consideration the harsh realities of life in the country and uses

to the greatest extent possible the human and material resources that are available. The close involvement of the educational assistance programme with those of other sectors such as agriculture, health, skills training, income earning activities, etc., is essential. The World Food Programme, for example, has assisted in the implementation of the project by the provision of food for work for Afghans which enabled the demands for remuneration for services to be met. Another feature of the project was the extent to which it called upon the services of a wide range of people and not just educators alone. Village leaders and representatives helped in the organization of local communities, craftsmen and craftswomen provided skills training, writers, illustrators and printers co-operated in the publishing of books, radio producers and script writers worked together on the preparation of broadcast programmes. The involvement of so wide a range of people in the basic education programme led to a greater understanding of the concept among the people as a whole.

Many difficulties were met in the execution of the programme. Although there was a professed adherence to the concept of basic education, discussion usually showed that it was not in fact well understood. Often it was regarded as concerned only with the initial stages of primary schooling but there was little recognition of the fact that it was meant to provide access to learning opportunities for all. Afghan NGOs entrusted with the construction of Basic Education centres produced designs for primary schools which ignored the need for other types of learning. A major obstacle was the inability to obtain access to sites where the programme was being carried out. This meant that monitoring was dependent upon second-hand reporting and inadequate information. One NGO reported that the basic education centre it had built had been destroyed as a result of fighting though no military activity was reported to have taken place in that particular area. Repairs which were carried out on schools in urban centres were again damaged in 1992 by undisciplined armed bands which destroyed many educational institutions. The hostility shown by some extremist groups to all forms of education could not at one stage be effectively controlled. The use of tents as community centres was also open to debate. Many communities supplied with tents for basic education purposes did not always use them as intended. Evidence obtained from HABITAT suggested that local communities could, with comparatively small amounts of assistance, provide for their own social services including education by repairing existing buildings rather than furnish new accommodation.

The extent to which local organizations actually assumed responsibility for the establishment of education programmes was difficult to measure because of the lack of access to communities. But it was known that some communities were hostile to outsiders while others warmly welcomed them. The capacity of Afghan NGOs to promote basic education remained largely unknown because of the inability to accompany them on their field trips to project sites. Reports submitted suggest that there was still an undue emphasis on formal education at the expense of more innovative forms of education. The lack of monitoring and evaluation of activities at the community level was therefore a major weakness of the project.

The best means of procuring, storing and distributing supplies was also a matter which required further consideration. Initially, supplies were restricted to those required for primary schooling and were obtained from the UNICEF warehouse in Copenhagen. There was a considerable lapse of time between the ordering and delivery of equipment and meanwhile similar items were purchased locally in Pakistan at a much lower cost. This suggests that the local procurement of supplies could save both time and money though further reflection might indicate that this is not necessarily the case. Local purchase also requires an administration responsible for the scrutiny of bids, for the supervision of packaging, storage and distribution of supplies, all of which have financial implications. Local purchase can also lead to accusations of preferential treatment for certain suppliers at the expense of others. It was also found that the original orders were restricted to items needed for schooling but did not meet the needs of basic

education for all. Tools for gardening, carpentry and crafts training, supplies and equipment for health education and supplies for leisure activities were also needed if basic education for all were to be provided. Travel difficulties within the country made the distribution of supplies dependent upon various means of transportation and these included planes and lorries as well as public transport.

The decision to give priority to the publication of supplementary readers was a wise one in view of the confusion over the primary education curriculum and the overall need for relevant reading materials. It was also found that some of the textbooks produced by NGOs for use in schools were tendentious and biassed and were not designed to develop tolerance and understanding among the Afghan people as a whole. The publication programme carried out by the project, though modest in scale, was an undoubted success and the books published were conspicuous by the attractiveness of their presentation, their colourful illustrations and the relevance of their contents to Afghan needs and language backgrounds. Although the dearth of books of all kinds was such that there were constant demands for reading materials, there is reason to believe that the supplementary readers were particularly appreciated. But again there were difficulties. The editing of the texts was time consuming and there was often controversy among the Afghans themselves over the translation of words and passages. Some copies of Facts for Life were burnt by religious groups when they were found to contain pictures of girls and women though many others raised no objections on this account. The books were also used in literacy classes set up in association with skills training programmes which enabled evaluations to be made of their relevance for out of school learners. The publication programme highlighted the need for a wider range of reading materials for basic education and intended for more general use instead of concentrating on the production of school textbooks alone.

It is generally acknowledged that broadcasting services have an important impact on listeners, but the use of such services in providing education for the deprived has still been insufficiently explored. The soap opera New Home, New Life takes as its theme, the return of a family of refugees to their native village and deals not only with their human relations but also with the problems and difficulties which they face in rebuilding their lives. So that matters related to food, health and finding sources of income are dealt with in the series. One example of the impact of the programme can be given. A programme for the vaccination of young children got off to a slow start. But when the subject was dealt with in the radio drama, interest was awakened in large numbers of people. As a result, the day following the broadcast, large numbers of mothers queued to have their children vaccinated. The many letters received by the programme producers are proof of its success. But close co-operation with the many sectors which have educational messages to convey, such as those engaged in mine clearance, health education, pest eradication, etc., is essential.

The skills training programme for carpet and silk weavers in the north and west of Afghanistan is a specific example of the integrated approach needed to provide access to education for all. These workshops designed to preserve carpet and silk making as income generating skills for out of school young people involve many in their implementation. Local leaders and craftsmen and craftswomen assist in their organization, teachers and instructors are recruited to give classes in literacy and numeracy and in health education. Writers and illustrators prepare colourful texts on the making of carpets, silk and vegetable dyes. Producers of the soap opera will take up the themes in their programmes. The training programmes, readers and broadcasts encourage the use of traditional dyes (thus providing another source of income for local people) and promote the restoration of traditional designs and patterns. All these exercises demand the collaboration of a great number of people but they also assist in the preservation of Afghanistan's cultural heritage and protect the environment. They use the considerable human resources and skills available within the country and in turn make a major contribution to social and economic progress.

It is significant that the types of educational programmes described gain the approval of many agencies and organizations active in the field such as the World Food Programme, the Red Cross, UNHCR and UNICEF, which support the projects both financially and materially.

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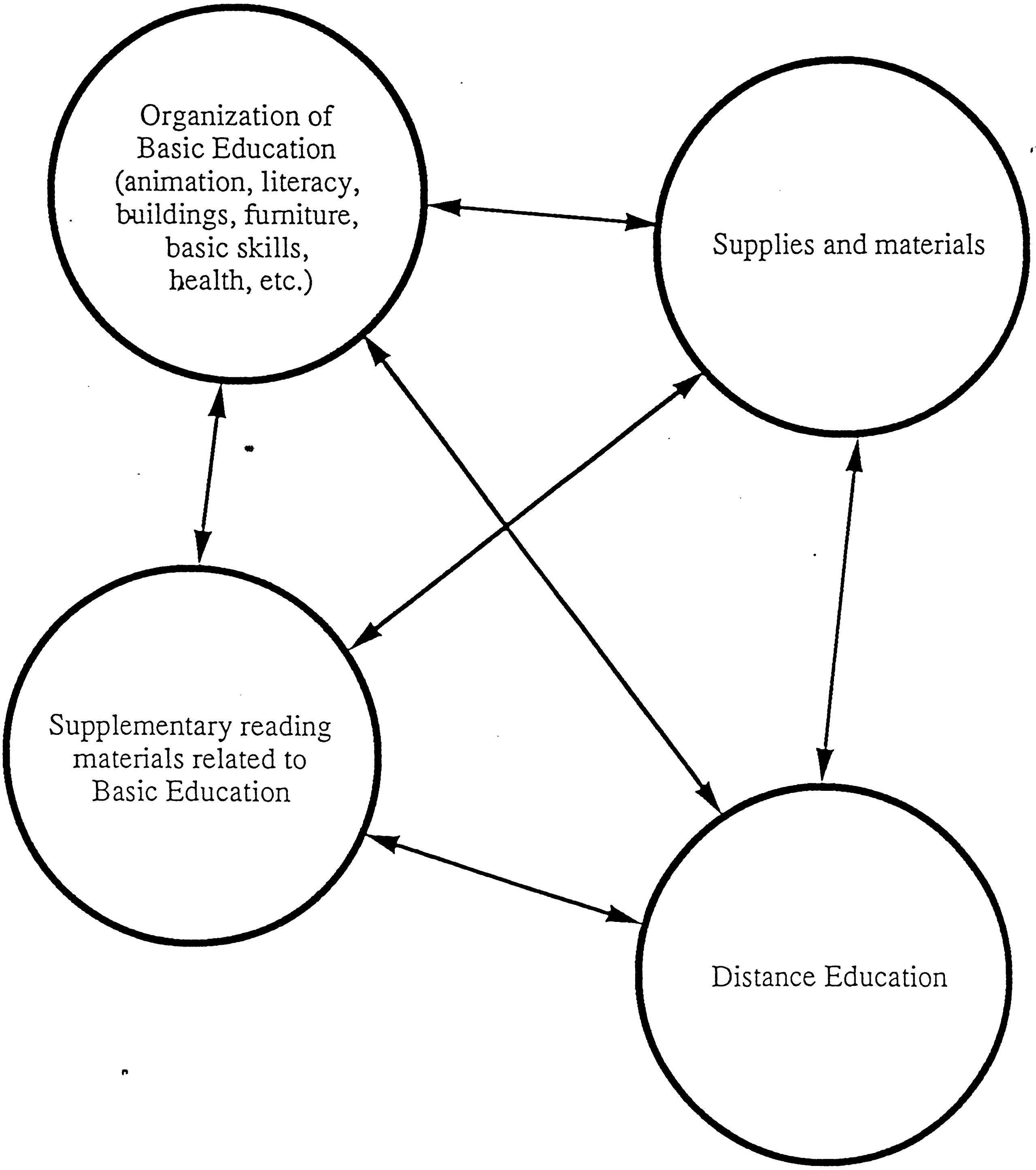
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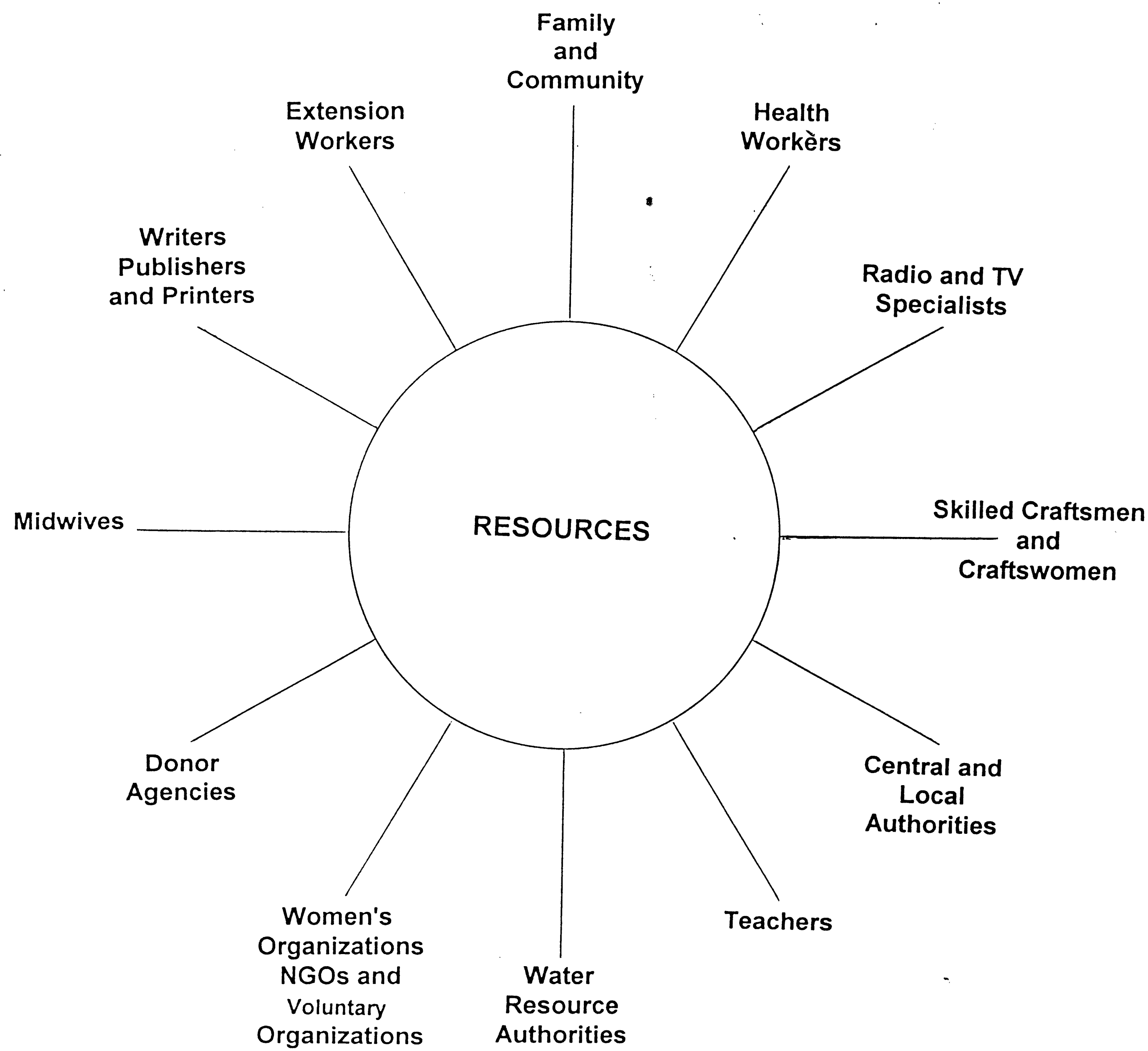
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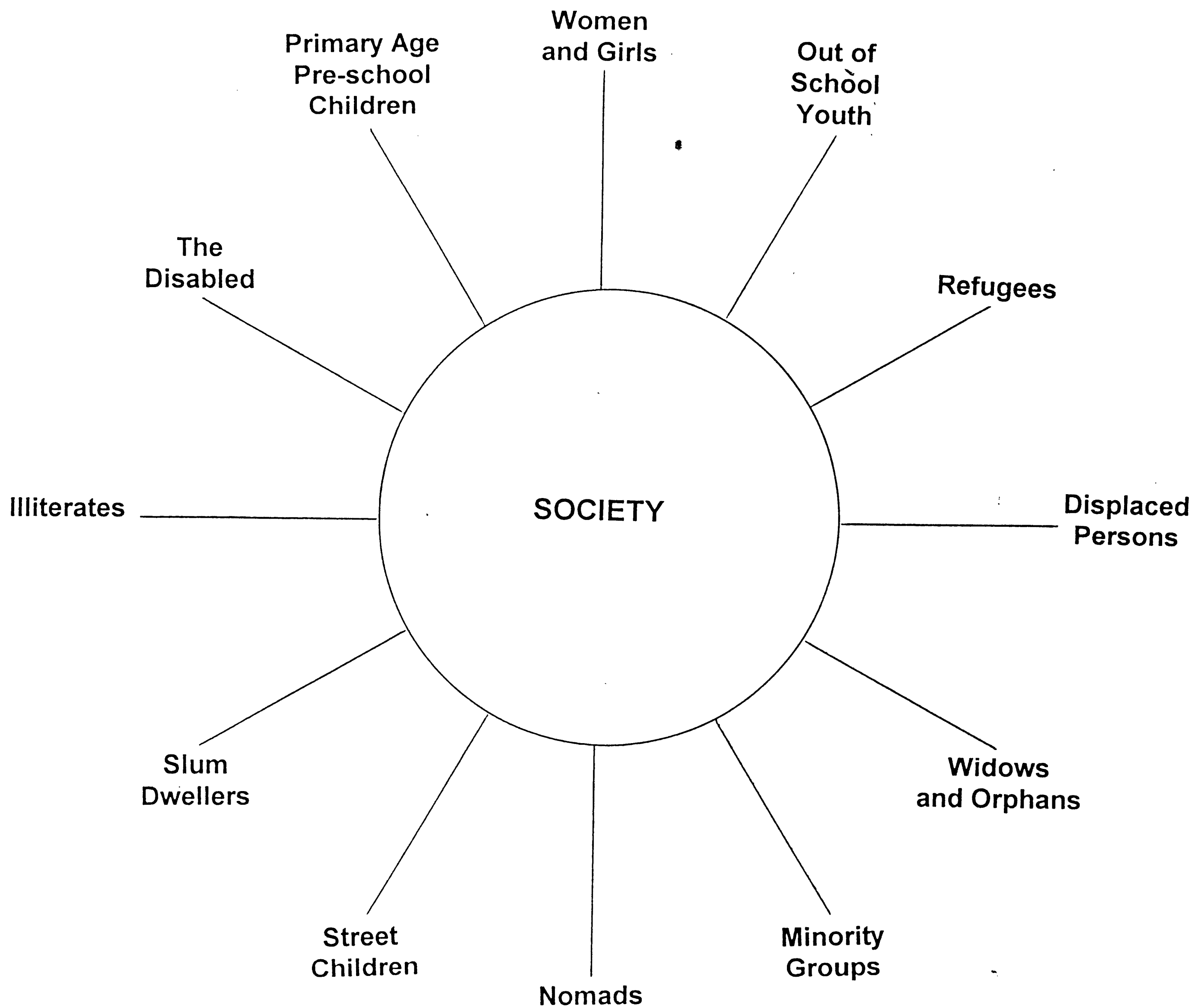
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damaged including some of those which had been rehabilitated as a result of assistance efforts. Additional settlements were established but this time for displaced persons inside the country and not outside it. The civil strife which followed the departure of the Russians resulted in enormous damage and included the looting of the national museum, which was a major part of the country's cultural heritage and the destruction of the national archives. The task of rehabilitating the country's educational services which was already enormous in 1989 is now such that considerable resourcefulness and ingenuity are required if anything is to be done to redress the situation. The needs of all levels of education are great but priorities will have to be determined and choices made. Schools at all levels, vocational and technical institutions, training colleges and universities will all have legitimate demands to make upon any assistance that may become available and regrettably not all of them will be satisfied for a long time to come.

When programmes of assistance for education in Afghanistan are drawn up, account will have to be taken of the fact that for almost a generation the majority of the population has had no education at all. Everyone has been affected and not just school-age children. The learning that was provided by the family was often lacking as children were orphaned as a result of war. Widows (25 % of married women) were left to bring up children without the support of males and the growing numbers of disabled people (estimated to number 500,000), many the victims of mines, further impeded human development. In many cases, the only skills learnt were those needed for the use of weaponry or for the destruction of human life and there is widespread resort to aggression and violence as a means of achieving ends. Trafficking in drugs and arms is a common means of obtaining a livelihood. The education and re-education needs of the country are great. The task is further complicated by the fact that 2.5 million people are displaced within the country and the capital, Kabul - which 15 years ago had a population of 2 million - has only 250,000 left. The establishment of services for the displaced is a major task. It is estimated that since 1979 four million children have died of starvation and 1.5 million people have been killed. The rehabilitation of education is not only concerned with the construction and repair of schools, the training of teachers, the development of curricula and the publication of textbooks. It also requires the provision of learning opportunities which enable people to obtain pure water for drinking and irrigation, grow food to feed the family, build safe and suitable shelter, develop skills which enable income to be earned, prevent disease, lead healthy lives and protect the environment. Education must also help people to understand that peace is preferable to war and that tolerance and understanding are necessary if communities are to live together in harmony. The ethnic, religious and linguistic tensions which obtain today will only be reduced through education. It is important, too, that a sense of civic responsibility be developed so that it is acknowledged that education facilities are for the people as a whole, that they belong to them and are under their protection and that any destruction of them is against the common interest. The priority for the immediate future and for a long time to come is education for all. In order to explain more fully what is meant by this a number of questions and answers on the subject are given in another chapter.

BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

1. What is Basic Education for All?

Basic education for all is the essential learning needed by all members of society in order to make human development possible. It is the learning needed by men and women, young people, boys and girls and very young children to ensure social and economic progress. It is not confined to the learning provided in schools and pre-school institutions but extends to all members of society without exception and can be made available in a variety of ways. Basic education for all is of particular importance today for the large numbers of people who are denied learning opportunities. They include the millions living in deprived rural areas, the victims of catastrophes, the vast numbers of women and girls denied formal education, refugees and displaced persons, widows and orphans, minority groups, the handicapped, urban slum dwellers and street children as well as those in search of employment and a livelihood. It is also significant that the proportion of aid spent on relieving disasters has increased from 2 % five years ago to 7 % today.

2. What is the role of basic education in human development?

By providing access to a variety of learning opportunities, basic education for all contributes to social and economic development. It also ensures that the basic human right to education is recognized. It gives special attention to the education needs of those who have often been educationally deprived such as women and girls, the rural poor, minority groups, nomads, refugees, street children, slum dwellers, orphans and the disabled. It endeavours to provide educational access where none has been provided before. It addresses the most pressing educational needs in society and in so doing makes a contribution to human progress which in turn reduces the possibilities of war and of aggression. It promotes better living conditions, better health and nutrition and imparts the skills needed to earn a living and to maintain oneself and one's family. It is the bedrock on which all subsequent development is built. Unless the needs of the most deprived groups in society are met, the major problems facing them will not go away but will remain to await resolution. While pressures will always be exerted to give priority to the educational needs of the better off members of society, the dangers implicit in not meeting the needs of the more disadvantaged groups will only increase. This is evident not only in the least developed countries in the world but in the more developed ones as well. Basic education can make a major contribution towards social harmony, peace and understanding.

3. How does basic education for all differ from traditional non-formal education?

Basic education for all is not an adaptation of existing non-formal education programmes which tend to be determined and administered exclusively by education authorities whose financial and manpower resources do not always allow them to reach those who are most in need of them. Basic education for all transfers both decision making and responsibility to local organizations. There is less dependence on the formal school teacher as the sole resource for providing education and the skills and competence of a larger number of people are required to make a contribution. The financing of such programmes is not provided exclusively by the allocation of funds by a central authority but calls on voluntary effort and initiative which in turn demands local involvement in decision making. This is not a means of depriving local communities of assistance where this is available but of ensuring that progress can be made in the establishment of educational services when financial constraints prevent this from happening. It is well known that teachers' salaries account for the greater part of all education budgets and if educational expansion is dependent upon the massive recruitment of new teachers then the provision of education for all is likely to be slow. The provision of basic education for all will

require the development of new attitudes and approaches and will certainly arouse opposition in many quarters - not least from teachers and university staff who will see it as a threat to their place in society and who will brand it as an inferior form of learning. The World Bank has commented, for example, that middle class bureaucrats and soldiers are ferocious defenders of their jobs, privileges and perks and re-orienting social spending towards the rural poor meets fiercer resistance than almost any other reform. But to deny them the help they need would be to obscure the realities and to delay the provision of education to those who need it most.

4. How is basic education provided?

Governments and non-governmental agencies are not the only channels for providing basic education for all. Parents play a major role in bringing up their children from the time of their birth. Mothers, for example, teach their daughters how to cook, sew and keep house and older sisters and brothers look after the younger family members. Skills are taught to young people by craftsmen and craftswomen. Simple health instruction is given by parents, midwives and other health workers. Ways of obtaining pure water and growing food are skills taught at a very early age in many communities. School teachers in the most deprived communities may have no part to play in the education of the community. Even, in countries where there is a determination to extend formal learning opportunities to all, financial constraints may prevent the expansion of the inadequate educational services that exist. In some of the poorest countries, the lack of resources forces governments to close schools, to dismiss teachers and to stop printing books. The provision of funds for educational services is determined on a priority basis and governments may be obliged to give less of the national budget to schooling than to agriculture, health and communications services. In such instances the major responsibility for providing learning opportunities rests with the family or with local community organizations. Only by taking such realities into consideration is it possible to develop effective basic education programmes which are designed to reach those who need them most.

5. Who provides basic education?

Parents, family and other members of the community all play a part in the provision of learning opportunities. But health workers, agricultural extension workers, craftsmen and craftswomen also teach as do the writers and producers of mass media programmes sent out by radio and television and the publishers and writers of reading materials. These can include the instructions on a bottle of medicine to a variety of publications including books. Signs which warn of danger or indicate a route to be taken are intended to instruct and those who devise them have a responsibility to convey messages clearly. Teachers in schools may have only a very small part to play in the most deprived communities in bringing education to all. When school teachers are available they may not be the best qualified to provide the most immediate learning needs of the communities they serve. For instruction in the digging of wells, the growing of food, the construction of shelter and the mastery of crafts, other members of the community may be better equipped to give the required instruction.

6. Where is basic education for all provided?

The home is the most important centre for basic education in the most deprived communities, for it is there that the young are brought up and are taught the moral and social values of the communities in which they live. Parents, sisters and brothers, family members and neighbours within the community all have an important part to play in meeting the learning needs, not only of the very young, but of everyone else. Those who advise on health and the growing of food also convey educational messages. If there is a school then the teachers will provide instruction, if there is a clinic

then health workers will give advice and help and extension workers will provide instruction on farming and gardening. Crafts may be taught in the home or in local workshops. A day care centre will help in the bringing up of children. In short there is no place where basic education for all cannot be provided.

7. Who has the responsibility for developing basic education for all?

It is rightly assumed that governments have the major responsibility for the establishment of basic education services for all. But financial considerations may impose strict limitations on what they can effectively do. Refugees, for example, may place an additional strain on overburdened authorities, communities in remote rural areas may not be accessible to the administrations set up to serve them and the education of women and girls outside the home may not be considered appropriate by the communities. In such circumstances the best means of setting up basic education facilities is through the local community. It is the local community which is best qualified to decide how they can be provided and to determine the learning needs of its members and to administer and supervise its programmes. Governments, even with the best will in the world, are frequently far too remote from the communities they serve to meet their most urgent needs adequately. A major effort is, therefore, required to assist deprived groups to take part in the provision of their own educational services. Rural communities, refugees and slum dwellers in various parts of the world have shown that by working together and determining their learning needs they can go a considerable way towards overcoming their deprivation. Guidance and support to such approaches can be given by governments, but ultimate responsibility must rest with the local community organization itself.

8. What steps should be taken to develop basic education for all?

Governments should acknowledge their limitations in extending education for all. Ambitious plans for extending formal education to all, which are praiseworthy in intent but without any possibility of achievement, should give way to more realistic approaches which transfer responsibility to local communities and which make it possible for assistance to be given directly to them. Some communities may traditionally have organizations for running their affairs and others may lack them entirely. Guidance and help are needed to help them to establish their local administrations. It is also necessary to emphasize that the purpose of such administrations is not to establish vehicles for making demands upon the government for the establishment of formal schooling but to assist in developing local services by self-reliant approaches using mainly local resources and personnel. Misunderstanding regarding the purpose of locally established organizations may lead initially to unsuitable appointments being made to committees and subsequent adjustments may be required. Communities need to understand that any decisions made will have to be implemented by them rather than by others. Should it be decided, for example, that primary schooling is needed, then the community will have to decide how this is to be provided.

9. What is the role of the school in basic education?

The school is one means of providing basic education. But children, though an important group in society, are not the only ones who stand in need of basic education. Education for all should cater for the needs of all and not for one group alone. Among the world's educationally deprived societies, which include refugees, orphans and street children, many have grown up without any access to education. Even the learning opportunities afforded by family life and by the community may be entirely lacking and the only learning provided is in the handling of weaponry or in the achievement of ends through violence and aggression. The learning needs of such groups are urgent and require immediate

action. But the provision of formal schooling of even the most rudimentary kind is a long-term process and demands the provision of accommodation, the recruitment and training of teachers, the preparation of curricula and the publication of books as well as the supply of instructional materials. In places where basic education programmes for all are most needed different approaches are required where implementation is possible in a shorter space of time and where more immediate benefits can be felt. Education for survival is not an empty phrase. It is a recognition of the priority learning needs of the world's more disadvantaged societies. Unless the educational needs of the weakest groups are met rapidly universal educational progress will continue to be slow. It is essential that consultation with these groups be undertaken before educational programmes are drawn up on their behalf. Such groups must be organized so that they can make decisions for themselves. Deprived individuals rarely find solutions by themselves. They need to do so in association with others.

10. What provisions need to be made for basic education?

The provision of basic education is not dependent upon the construction of schools. It can be provided in homes, in community buildings, in day care centres, in clinics, in workshops, in fields and offices. The learning messages must first be identified and the means of conveying them worked out subsequently. The assumption that it is first necessary to build a school before any learning can be imparted is false. It will be necessary, however, to supply a certain amount of materials to make learning possible. Spades, hoes, seeds and watering cans may be needed to provide instruction in food growing; thermometers, scales and measuring rods and bottles may be needed for teaching about health; tools may be needed for carpentry and motor repair and looms and wheels are necessary for weaving and pottery making while toys may be required for day care programmes. Where literacy and numeracy are taught or where there is a school, there is a need for pens, paper and exercise books as well as for blackboards and chalk. Without such basic supplies it is unlikely that satisfactory learning programmes can be put into operation.

11. What is the role of literacy and numeracy in basic education?

In any learning programme the desirability of literacy and numeracy is self-evident. But this should not be seen as an exclusive goal in itself. The need for literacy and numeracy should become clear when other learning exercises are undertaken. A local group anxious to obtain credit for a co-operative enterprise will be aware of the need for literacy and numeracy skills to manage its affairs more efficiently. A mother who learns how to treat diarrhoea may want to recall how to deal with the condition by reading about it. A craftsman learning to make earth bricks may be willing to learn to read in order to refer to simple written instructions on how to make them. The combination of literacy with life skills instruction is an important means of providing basic education.

12. What is the role of formal schooling in basic education?

Formal schooling has an important role to play in the development of basic education, but the extent to which it is available depends to a large extent on local facilities and resources. It is also essential that the type of schooling provided be in accordance with local needs and priorities and is not imposed from outside without giving consideration to whether it is relevant or not. The high drop-out rate from primary schooling in deprived communities, and which is often as much as 50 per cent after the first year, is a matter of concern and should be the subject of careful study. New approaches are required in the establishment of formal learning opportunities and these include : the provision of accommodation for schooling, the determination of school hours and terms, the supply of reading and learning materials, the development of relevant curricula and the use of certification as a means of

assessment of progress. Schools need not be located in costly buildings conforming to a standardized pattern but can be housed in various forms of shelter provided by the community itself. Times for schooling in rural areas need not follow those of urban institutions, but can be adjusted to local requirements which may include the vagaries of the weather or the needs of agricultural work such as planting and harvesting. New ways can also be sought of supplying reading materials which do not rely exclusively on government publishing facilities but which also call upon the private sector for support and assistance. Academic curricula oriented towards sedentary and professional careers will also prove unsuitable for the majority of learners who will be expected to use manual and practical skills in their daily work. The use of certification in academic performance as the principal means of measurement of educational progress will also require review.

13. <u>What is the relationship between formal and non-formal education?</u>

At the present time the links between the two types of education are not very strong and need to be strengthened. Non-formal education should be regarded as a stepping-stone which permits access to other levels of education in the formal system. But for this to come about it will be necessary to adapt the teaching methods, programmes and materials to meet the needs of an entirely new type of learner. It will not be enough to make a hasty revision of the approaches used with very young children and assume that they will prove successful with out-of-school young people and adults. Unless the interests of older learners are taken into account and their intellectual capacities considered little interest will be shown in the course of instruction offered. The timing of courses, for example, will have to be in accordance with their requirements and not tailored to suit the convenience of instructors. Materials will have to be specially prepared to suit the needs of the learners. It should be recognized that beneficiaries of basic education should ultimately have open access to all levels of learning without restriction and that no obstacles should stand in their way of becoming scientists, doctors, lawyers and decision-makers if they prove to have the ability for such advancement. The ways in which bridges can be built between various types of education are matters for careful consideration.

14. <u>What is the role of the teacher in basic education?</u>

Teachers have an important role to play in basic education. Dedicated and dynamic teachers, open to reform, can do much to ensure that educational opportunities are made available to all. But much effort and training are needed if they are to be re-oriented to carry out the work required effectively. Few teachers, for example, are prepared to work in remote rural areas or in deprived communities and when they do so they may feel that their own opportunities for career advancement and for further study are being jeopardised. The teacher's own experience of rote learning and memorization in school may inhibit the introduction of new approaches to teaching. A familiarity with rigid school hours and terms and with strict certification procedures may also stand in the way of the introduction of more practical approaches to the development of programmes. Repeated demands by student teachers for more subject content in their courses of training and for less teaching practice are indications of the difficulties that may be experienced in re-orienting teachers towards education for all.

A major exercise is required in which government officials, teachers and the general public all take part before widespread basic education programmes can be introduced. Such an exercise should not be dominated by those directly involved in giving instruction but should provide a platform whereby the private sector and community representatives can all participate in the discussions and have a voice in the decisions that are made.

15. What reading materials are needed for basic education?

In the past the school textbook was given priority in education programmes. But it has become increasingly apparent that the cost of the preparation, publication and distribution of textbooks to all school children is a goal beyond the reach of most governments anxious to provide education to its more deprived groups. The production of textbooks is not only very expensive but the recurrent costs are prohibitive. Only in the wealthier countries, where basic education is a matter of less urgency, is it possible to implement a textbook production policy successfully. There are growing doubts about the value of single textbooks, which can sometimes be tendentious and which may inhibit curiosity and the desire to seek information from various sources. A greater selection of reading materials is required if education for all is to become a reality and to meet real needs. A number of simple readers, well illustrated and colourful, may do more to encourage literacy than textbooks which are not always printed on good paper and may not invite study. A larger number of shorter, simpler books which can be passed around to be read by more than one person may serve a more useful purpose than the single text which may manipulate the reader and discourage attempts to go further afield for information.

Basic education demands a reading ability not just for the purpose of reading books. In order to administer medicine to someone suffering from malaria it is necessary to be able to read the instructions on dosages for adults and children. For the satisfactory use of fertilisers, an understanding of instructions in their use is required. Reading materials are needed in order to convey a wide range of information. Distance learning programmes require supplementary materials to reinforce the instruction provided. Organizations which take responsibility for community programmes need to maintain records and keep accounts. Local newspapers or information sheets provide a means of conveying information to the community at large. Examples can be multiplied. But all these forms of written materials require paper, equipment for printing them and the means of ensuring their distribution. All too often such resources are restricted to the needs of textbook production so that these other reading needs are neglected. A policy for the developing of printing services is essential.

16. Is basic education a second-best option and an inferior means of providing learning?

The answer to this question is NO. To consider that basic education is an inferior form of education is based on a number of false assumptions. Formal education, for example, cannot always meet the learning needs of all members of deprived communities for financial and other considerations. Research in certain countries has shown that life skills are often learnt better by children who do not go to school at all than by those who do. Skills needed for earning a living are often better acquired in workshops and factories than in schools. But those who consider that basic education is an inferior option fail to take into account that in the least developed countries of the world governments cannot (even with financial assistance) meet the cost of the inadequate formal education programmes that they have and that any expansion of them is beyond their means. Basic education endeavours to ensure that, despite the economic constraints which exist, relevant learning opportunities are opened up to those who have hitherto had none at all. An insistence upon formal school programmes dependent upon a centralised government administration fails to take into account the considerable number of new approaches that have been developed in recent years. A greater use of more cost effective means of providing education using the latest technical developments and the mass media can do much to extend education to all. Greater local self-reliance and enterprise in the setting up of educational programmes rather than exclusive dependence on government initiative can be an effective means of expanding educational opportunities. Basic education is important as a means of providing programmes which meet the needs of the very deprived such as refugees and displaced persons when rapid results are needed. To meet their needs through the provision of traditional formal programmes would take far too long to

implement. To insist upon the provision of formal education for the disadvantaged groups will only prolong their deprivation. Unless programmes with immediate impact can be developed the problem of opening up learning opportunities will be exacerbated rather than alleviated.

17. What new means can be developed to improve the implementation of programmes for basic education for all?

The full potential of the latest technological devices in the promotion of education for all has still not been realised. Inter-active educational broadcasts reach large numbers of deprived people and are both cost effective and a means of maintaining adequate standards of instruction. The fear that there may be insufficient radios to ensure that the programmes reach large numbers of people is not always borne out by experience. In many parts of the world nomadic societies and refugees have been found to be frequent listeners to programmes and to have the radios to enable them to do so. Even the use of video films is today extended to deprived communities by means of mobile educational services. While much is being done to use these innovative approaches there is a need for greater official recognition of their importance as vehicles for providing learning opportunities. The services they offer are still largely unused. There is also evidence to show that messages conveyed through the mass media are more readily accepted than those provided by teachers in classrooms. Programmes which combine entertainment with education are increasingly being developed in all parts of the world.

18. What help can be given to develop basic education programmes for deprived communities?

There can be little doubt that the most urgent requirement today is to provide concrete evidence of how basic education programmes are implemented within deprived communities. Discussions on the elements of basic education for all have gone on for many years now and the arguments for and against them have been aired over and over again. But less reference is made to the efforts that have been exerted to implement new programmes in various parts of the world. The most important requirements for the development of basic education for all at the local level are: the animation and organization of local communities to assume responsibility for the development of their own services, the provision of a minimum of supplies, equipment and tools to enable programmes to operate, the development of publishing and printing programmes which enable a variety of reading materials to be produced both centrally and locally and the effective use of the latest technologies and the mass media to provide basic education for all.

19. What financial assistance is required to develop basic education for all?

Unlike large-scale programmes intended to develop the formal education system, assistance to basic education can be provided on a much more limited scale. The vast amounts required for the construction of school buildings, for the training of teachers, the payment of their salaries, the development of curricula and the publication of textbooks are not required in basic education programmes for all. Aid can be provided direct through local communities and organizations rather than through government Ministries and administrations. It can be provided in the form of guidance on community organization, the supply of tools, equipment and supplies, the publication of simple reading materials on particular topics and the preparation of radio broadcasts and TV programmes. Projects can be restricted to particular groups and communities and can be formulated to ensure that they reach the most deprived and are not diverted to reach only the more advantaged members of society.

The amount of the national budget allocated to education is determined after taking into account the amounts required for other services and sectors such as health, agriculture, communications, etc.

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

BASIC EDUCATION FOR ALL

- The Afghan Experience -

Conceptual framework and strategies

John Allen

EDUCATION SECTOR

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C. John Allen

born 1921

Educated at Chester, U.K., and at St Catherine's College, Oxford. Held posts as Head of an Institute of Modern Languages in Madrid, Spain, and Head of the Department of English as a Foreign Language at the College of Advanced Technology, Wales. Joined UNESCO in 1956 and worked on projects in Thailand, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Ethiopia where he was also UNESCO Representative and Liaison Officer with the Economic Commission for Africa and the Organization of African Unity. Also served at UNESCO Headquarters where he assisted in the administration of field activities in a number of Arab states. After retirement, has worked as a consultant and has carried out missions in a variety of countries including Pakistan, Afghanistan, Uganda, Malawi, China and Outer Mongolia. For almost twenty years he has been closely involved in the development and implementation of Basic Education projects particularly in deprived areas and where there are large numbers of refugees.

Has written many papers and reports on the subject of Basic Education for All.

Details on the implementation of the programme of assistance for Basic Education for All in Afghanistan are available in the Section for Educational Research and Innovation, Division of Higher Education, UNESCO

Tel (33-1) 45.68.08.10

Fax (33-1) 40.65.94.05